THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Delhi Development Authority has reported that the construction of Vasant Kunj Shopping Mall is as per the prescribed land use and the auction purchasers are required to obtain necessary clearances from Statutory Authorities before execution of the project.

(c) As and when an encroachment is noticed, the concerned authorities are required to take action in accordance with the provisions of law.

Illegal trading of elephants from Assam

348. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of illegal trading of elephants from Assam;

(b) if so, the steps Government are taking to stop such illegal activity in Assam;

(c) whether it is a fact that some forest officers are also involved in this; and

(d) if so, the justification for it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) As per the information received from the State Government of Assam, there are no reports of illegal trade of elephants from Assam.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Shrinking of forest cover

349. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to the latest forest survey, the dense forest cover of the country shrunk by 26,245 sq. km. between 2001 and 2003;

(b) if so, whether efforts of afforestation proved to be futile since forest cover has come down drastically in these two years; and